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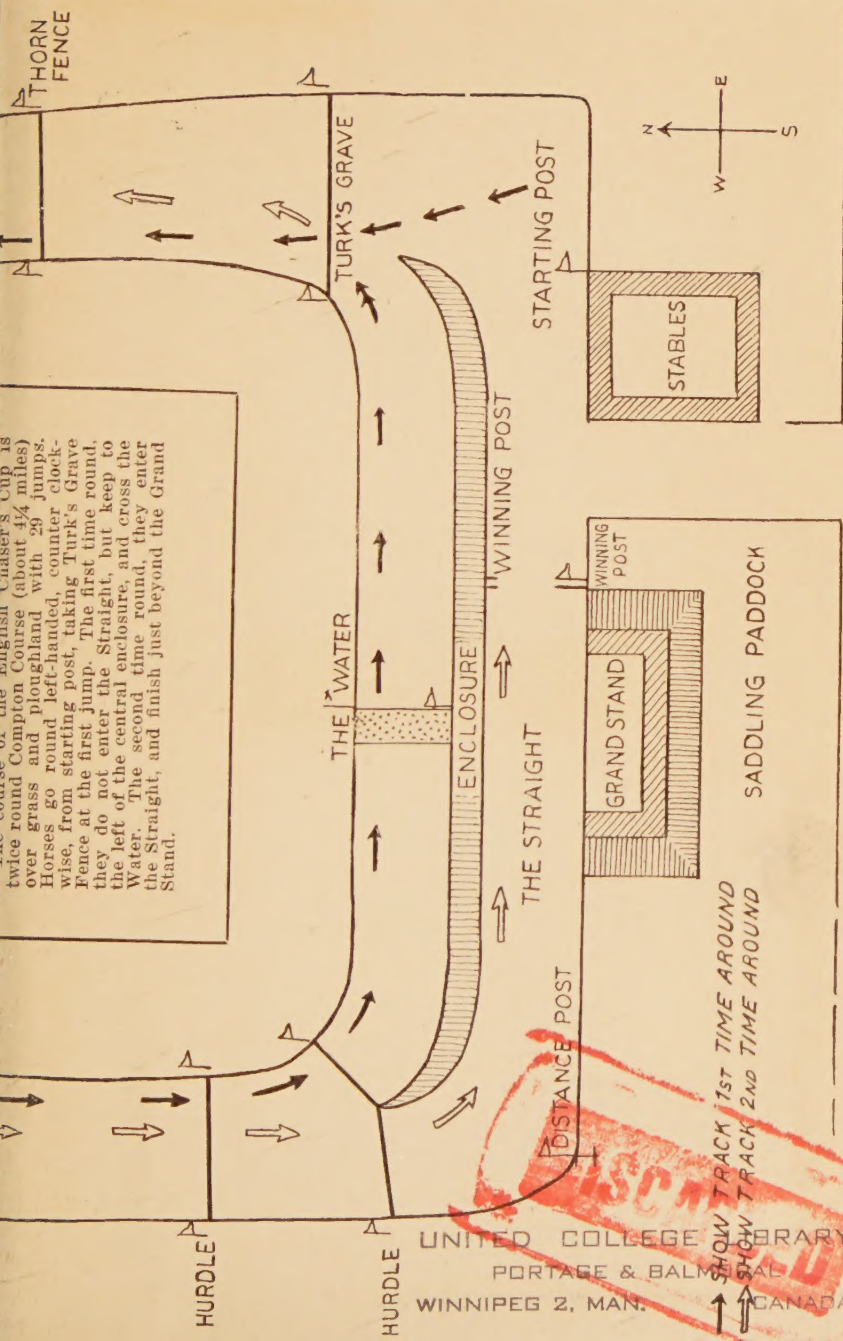
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MAP OF THE  
COMPTON COURSE

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course for the English Cuiaser's Cup is twice round Compton Course (about 4 1/4 miles) over grass and ploughland with 29 jumps. Horses go round left-handed, counter clockwise, from starting post, taking Turk's Grave Fence at the first jump. The first time round, they do not enter the Straight, but keep to the left of the central enclosure, and cross the Water. The second time round, they enter the Straight, and finish just beyond the Grand Stand.



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RIGHT ROYAL

By JOHN MASEFIELD

ROSAS

GALLIPOLI

ENSLAVED

THE FAITHFUL

LOST ENDEAVOUR

THE DAFFODIL FIELDS

SELECTED POEMS

A MAINSAIL HAUL

CAPTAIN MARGARET

THE OLD FRONT LINE

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NINETY-EIGHT

REYNARD THE FOX, OR THE GHOST HEATH  
RUN

THE STORY OF A ROUND-HOUSE AND OTHER  
POEMS

COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS: VOL. I, POEMS;  
VOL. II, PLAYS

THE EVERLASTING MERCY AND THE WIDOW  
IN THE BYE STREET

# RIGHT ROYAL

By  
JOHN MASEFIELD

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
1920

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6025  
A77R5  
1920  
C.1.

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By JOHN MASEFIELD

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## NOTE

The persons, horses and events described in this poem are imaginary. No reference is made to any living person or horse.

JOHN MASEFIELD.



## PART I



## RIGHT ROYAL

An hour before the race they talked  
together

A pair of lovers in the mild March weather,  
Charles Cothill and the golden lady, Em.

Beautiful England's hands had fashioned  
them.

He was from Sleins, that manor up the  
Lithe;

Riding the Downs had made his body  
blithe;

Stalwart he was, and springy, hardened,  
swift,

Able for perfect speed with perfect thrift,  
Man to the core yet moving like a lad.

Dark honest eyes with merry gaze he had,  
A fine firm mouth, and wind-tan on his  
skin.

He was to ride and ready to begin.

He was to ride Right Royal, his own horse,  
In the English Chaser's Cup on Compton  
Course.

Under the pale coat reaching to his spurs  
One saw his colours, which were also hers,  
Narrow alternate bars of blue and white  
Blue as the speedwell's eye and silver  
bright.

What with hard work and waiting for the  
race,  
Trouble and strain were marked upon his  
face;  
Men would have said that something worried him.

She was a golden lady, dainty, trim,  
As like the love time as laburnum blossom.  
Mirth, truth and goodness harboured in her  
bosom.

Pure colour and pure contour and pure  
grace

Made the sweet marvel of her singing face;  
She was the very may-time that comes in  
When hawthorns bud and nightingales  
begin.

To see her tread the red-tippt daisies white  
In the green fields all golden with delight,  
Was to believe Queen Venus come again,  
She was as dear as sunshine after rain;  
Such loveliness this golden lady had.

All lovely things and pure things made  
her glad,

But most she loved the things her lover  
loved,

The windy Downlands where the kestrels  
roved,

The sea of grasses that the wind runs over  
Where blundering beetles drunken from  
the clover

Stumble about the startled passer-by.

There on the great grass underneath the  
sky

She loved to ride with him for hours on  
hours,

Smelling the seasoned grass and those  
small flowers,

Milkworts and thymes, that grow upon the  
Downs.

There from a chalk edge they would see  
the towns:

Smoke above trees, by day, or spires of  
churches

Gleaming with swinging wind-cocks on  
their perches.

Or windows flashing in the light, or trains  
Burrowing below white smoke across the  
plains.

By night, the darkness of the valley set  
With scattered lights to where the ridges  
met

And three great glares making the heaven  
dun,

Oxford and Wallingford and Abingdon.

“Dear, in an hour,” said Charles, “the  
race begins.

Before I start I must confess my sins.  
For I have sinned, and now it troubles me.”

“I saw that you were sad,” said Emily.

“Before I speak,” said Charles, “I must  
premise.

You were not here to help me to be wise,  
And something happened, difficult to tell.  
Even if I sinned, I feel I acted well,  
From inspiration, mad as that may seem.  
Just at the grey of dawn I had a dream.

It was the strangest dream I ever had.  
It was the dream that drove me to be mad.

I dreamed I stood upon the race-course  
here,

Watching a blinding rainstorm blowing  
clear,

And as it blew away I said aloud,  
‘That rain will make soft going on the  
ploughed.’

And instantly I saw the whole great course,  
The grass, the brooks, the fences toppt with  
gorse,

Gleam in the sun; and all the ploughland  
shone

Blue, like a marsh, though now the rain  
had gone.

And in my dream I said, 'That plough  
will be

Terrible work for some, but not for me.  
Not for Right Royal.'

And a voice said, 'No  
Not for Right Royal.'

And I looked, and lo  
There was Right Royal, speaking, at my  
side.

The horse's very self, and yet his hide  
Was like, what shall I say? like pearl on  
fire,

A white soft glow of burning that did  
twire

Like soft white-heat with every breath he  
drew.

A glow, with utter brightness running  
through;  
Most splendid, though I cannot make you  
see.

His great crest glittered as he looked at me  
Criniered with spitting sparks; he stamped  
the ground  
All cock and fire, trembling like a hound,  
And glad of me, and eager to declare  
His horse's mind.

And I was made aware  
That, being a horse, his mind could only  
say  
Few things to me. He said, 'It is my day,  
My day, to-day; I shall not have another.'

And as he spoke he seemed a younger  
brother  
Most near, and yet a horse, and then he  
grinned  
And tossed his crest and crinier to the wind

And looked down to the Water with an eye  
All fire of soul to gallop dreadfully.

All this was strange, but then a stranger  
thing

Came afterwards. I woke all shivering  
With wonder and excitement, yet with  
dread

Lest the dream meant that Royal should  
be dead,

Lest he had died and come to tell me so.  
I hurried out; no need to hurry, though;  
There he was shining like a morning star.  
Now hark. You know how cold his man-  
ners are,

Never a whinny for his dearest friend.  
To-day he heard me at the courtyard end,  
He left his breakfast with a shattering call,  
A View Halloo, and, swinging in his stall,  
Ran up to nuzzle me with signs of joy.  
It staggered Harding and the stable-boy.

And Harding said, 'What's come to him  
to-day?

He must have had a dream he beat the  
bay.'

Now that was strange; and, what was  
stranger, this.

I know he tried to say those words of his,  
'It is my day'; and Harding turned to me,  
'It is his day to-day, that's plain to see.'  
Right Royal nuzzled at me as he spoke.

That staggered me. I felt that I should  
choke.

It came so pat upon my unsaid thought,  
I asked him what he meant.

He answered 'Naught.

It only came into my head to say.

But there it is. To-day's Right Royal's  
day.'

That was the dream. I cannot put the glory

With which it filled my being, in a story.  
No one can tell a dream.

Now to confess.

The dream made daily life a nothingness,  
Merely a mould which white-hot beauty  
fills,

Pure from some source of passionate joys  
and skills.

And being flooded with my vision thus,  
Certain of winning, puffed and glorious,  
Walking upon this earth-top like a king,  
My judgment went. I did a foolish thing,  
I backed myself to win with all I had.

Now that it's done I see that it was mad,  
But still, I had to do it, feeling so.

That is the full confession; now you know."

SHE

The thing is done, and being done, must be.  
You cannot hedge. Would you had talked  
with me

Before you plunged. But there, the thing  
is done.

HE

Do not exaggerate the risks I run.

Right Royal was a bad horse in the past,  
A rogue, a cur, but he is cured at last;  
For I was right, his former owner wrong,  
He is a game good chaser going strong.  
He and my lucky star may pull me through.

SHE

O grant they may; but think what's racing  
you,  
Think for a moment what his chances are  
Against Sir Lopez, Soyland, Kubbadar.

HE

You said you thought Sir Lopez past his  
best.

I do, myself.

SHE

But there are all the rest.

Peterkinooks, Red Ember, Counter Vair,  
And then Grey Glory and the Irish mare.

HE

She's scratched. The rest are giving me  
a stone.

Unless the field hides something quite  
unknown

I stand a chance. The going favours me.  
The ploughland will be bogland certainly,  
After this rain. If Royal keeps his nerve,  
If no one cannons me at jump or swerve,  
I stand a chance. And though I dread to  
fail,

This passionate dream that drives me like  
a sail

Runs in my blood, and cries, that I shall  
win.

SHE

Please Heaven you may; but now (for me)  
begin

Again the horrors that I cannot tell,  
Horrors that made my childhood such a  
    hell,  
Watching my Father near the gambler's  
    grave  
Step after step, yet impotent to save.

You do not know, I never let you know,  
The horror of those days of long ago  
When Father raced to ruin. Every night  
After my Mother took away the light  
For weeks before each meeting, I would see  
Horrible horses looking down on me  
Laughing and saying "We shall beat your  
    Father."

Then when the meetings came I used to  
    gather  
Close up to Mother, and we used to pray.  
"O God, for Christ's sake, let him win  
    to-day."

And then we had to watch for his return,

Craning our necks to see if we could learn,  
Before he entered, what the week had been.

Now I shall look on such another scene  
Of waiting on the race-chance. For to-day,  
Just as I did with Father, I shall say  
“Yes, he’ll be beaten by a head, or break  
A stirrup leather at the wall, or take  
The brook too slow, and, then, all will be  
lost.”

Daily, in mind, I saw the Winning Post,  
The Straight, and all the horses’ glimmer-  
ing forms  
Rushing between the railings’ yelling  
swarms,  
My Father’s colours leading. Every day,  
Closing my eyes, I saw them die away,  
In the last strides, and lose, lose by a neck,  
Lose by an inch, but lose, and bring the  
wreck  
A day’s march nearer. Now begins again

The agony of waiting for the pain.  
The agony of watching ruin come  
Out of man's dreams to overwhelm a  
home.

Go now, my dear. Before the race is due,  
We'll meet again, and then I'll speak with  
you.

In a race-course box behind the Stand  
Right Royal shone from a strapper's hand.  
A big dark bay with a restless tread,  
Fetlock deep in a wheat-straw bed;  
A noble horse of a nervy blood,  
By O Mon Roi out of Rectitude.  
Something quick in his eye and ear  
Gave a hint that he might be queer.  
In front, he was all to a horseman's mind,  
Some thought him a trifle light behind.  
By two good points might his rank be  
known,  
A beautiful head and a Jumping Bone.

He had been the hope of Sir Button Budd,  
Who bred him there at the Fletchings stud,  
But the Fletchings jockey had flogged him  
cold

In a narrow thing as a two-year-old.  
After that, with his sulks and swerves,  
Dread of the crowd and fits of nerves,  
Like a wastrel bee who makes no honey  
He had hardly earned his entry money.

Liking him still, though he failed at racing,  
Sir Button trained him for steeple-chasing.  
He jumped like a stag, but his heart was  
cowed;

Nothing would make him face the crowd;  
When he reached the Straight where the  
crowds began

He would make no effort for any man.

Sir Button sold him, Charles Cothill bought  
him,

Rode him to hounds and soothed and  
taught him.

After two years' care Charles felt assured  
That his horse's broken heart was cured,  
And the jangled nerves in tune again.

And now, as proud as a King of Spain,  
He moved in his box with a restless tread,  
His eyes like sparks in his lovely head,  
Ready to run between the roar  
Of the stands that face the Straight once  
more;

Ready to race, though blown, though beat,  
As long as his will could lift his feet,  
Ready to burst his heart to pass  
Each gasping horse in that street of grass.  
John Harding said to his stable-boy,

“Would looks were deeds, for he looks a  
joy.

He's come on well in the last ten days.”  
The horse looked up at the note of praise,  
He fixed his eye upon Harding's eye,  
Then he put all thought of Harding by,  
Then his ears went back and he clipped all  
clean

The manger's well where his oats had been.

John Harding walked to the stable-yard,  
His brow was worried with thinking hard.  
He thought, "His sire was a Derby winner,  
His legs are steel, and he loves his dinner,  
And yet of old when they made him race,  
He sulked or funk'd like a real disgrace;  
Now for man or horse, I say, it's plain,  
That what once he's been, he'll be again.

For all his looks, I'll take my oath  
That horse is a cur, and slack as sloth.

He'll funk at a great big field like this,  
And the lad won't cure that sloth of his,  
He stands no chance, and yet Bungay says  
He's been backed all morning a hundred  
ways.

He was twenty to one, last night, by  
Heaven:

Twenty to one and now he's seven.

Well, one of these fools whom fortune loves  
Has made up his mind to go for the gloves;  
But here's Dick Cappell to bring me news."

Dick Cappell came from a London Mews,  
His fleshless face was a stretcht skin  
sheath

For the narrow pear of the skull beneath.  
He had cold blue eyes, and a mouth like a  
slit,

With yellow teeth sticking out from it.  
There was no red blood in his lips or skin,  
He'd a sinister, hard, sharp soul within.  
Perhaps, the thing that he most enjoyed  
Was being rude when he felt annoyed.  
He sucked his cane, he nodded to John,  
He asked, "What's brought your lamb-  
kin on?"

John said, "I had meant to ask of you,  
Who's backing him, Dick, I hoped you  
knew."

Dick said, "Pill Stewart has placed the  
money.

I don't know whose."

John said, "That's funny."

"Why funny?" said Dick; but John said  
naught;

He looked at the horse's legs and thought.

Yet at last he said, "It beats me clean,

But whoever he is, he must be green.

There are eight in this could give him a  
stone,

And twelve should beat him on form alone.

The lad can ride, but it's more than riding

That will give the bay and the grey a  
hiding."

Dick sucked his cane and looked at the  
horse

With "Nothing's certain on Compton  
Course.

He looks a peach. Have you tried him  
high?"

John said, "You know him as well as I;  
What he has done and what he can do.  
He's been ridden to hounds this year or  
two.

When last he was raced, he made the running,  
For a stable companion twice at Sunning.  
He was placed, bad third, in the Blowbury  
Cup

And second at Tew with Kingston up.  
He sulked at Folkestone, he funk'd at  
Speen,  
He baulked at the ditch at Hampton Green,  
Nick Kingston thought him a slug and cur,  
'You must cut his heart out to make him  
stir.'

But his legs are iron; he's fine and fit."

Dick said, "Maybe; but he's got no grit.  
With to-day's big field, on a course like  
this,  
He will come to grief with that funk of his.

Well. It's queer, to me, that they've  
brought him on.

It's Kubbadar's race. Good morning,  
John."

When Dick had gone from the stable-yard,  
John wrote a note on a racing card.

He said, "Since Stewart has placed the  
com.,

It's Mr. Cothill he got it from.

Now why should that nice young man go  
blind

And back his horse? Has he lost his mind?  
Such a nice young fellow, so civil-spoken,  
Should have more sense than to get him  
broken,

For broken he'll be as sure as eggs

If he puts his money on horses' legs.

And to trust to this, who's a nice old thing,  
But can no more win than a cow can sing.

Well, they say that wisdom is dearly  
bought,

A world of pain for a want of thought;  
But why should he back what stands no  
chance,

No more than the Rowley Mile's in France?  
Why didn't he talk of it first with me?

Well, Lord, we trainers can let it be,  
Why can't these owners abstain the same?  
It can't be aught but a losing game.  
He'll finish ninth; he'll be forced to sell  
His horse, his stud, and his home as well;  
He'll lose his lady, and all for this  
A daft belief in that horse of his.

It's nothing to me, a man might say,  
That a rich young fool should be cast away,  
Though what he does with his own, in fine,  
Is certainly no concern of mine.  
I'm paid to see that his horse is fit,

I can't engage for an owner's wit.  
For the heart of a man may love his  
    brother,  
But who can be wise to save another?  
Souls are our own to save from burning,  
We must all learn how, and pay for learn-  
    ing.

And now, by the clock, that bell that went  
Was the Saddling Bell for the first event.

Since the time comes close, it will save  
    some swearing  
If we get beforehand, and start preparing."

The roads were filled with a drifting  
    crowd,  
Many mouth-organs droned aloud,  
A couple of lads in scarlet hats,  
Yellow trousers and purple spats,  
Dragged their banjos, wearily eyeing  
Passing brakes full of sportsmen Hi-ing.

Then with a long horn blowing a glory  
Came the four-in-hand of the young Lord

Tory,

The young Lord's eyes on his leader's  
ears

And the blood-like team going by to  
cheers.

Then in a brake came cheerers and  
hooters

Peppering folk from tin peashooters;

The Green Man's Friendly in bright mauve  
caps

Followed fast in the Green Man's traps,

The crowd made way for the traps to pass

Then a drum beat up with a blare of brass,

Medical students smart as paint

Sang gay songs of a sad complaint.

A wolf-eyed man who carried a kipe

Whistled as shrill as a man could pipe,

Then paused and grinned with his gaps  
of teeth

Crying "Here's your colours for Compton  
Heath,

All the colours of all the starters,  
For gentlemen's ties and ladies' garters;  
Here you have them, penny a pin,  
Buy your colours and see them win.  
Here you have them, the favourites' own,  
Sir Lopez' colours, the blue-white-roan,  
For all the races and what'll win 'em  
Real jockey's silk with a pin to pin 'em."

Out of his kipe he sold to many  
Bright silk buttons and charged a penny.

A bookie walked with his clerk beside him,  
His stool on his shoulders seemed to ride  
him,

His white top-hat bore a sign which ran  
"Your old pal Bunkie the working man."  
His clothes were a check of three-inch  
squares,

"Bright brown and fawn with the pearls  
in pairs,"

Double pearl buttons ran down the side,  
The knees were tight and the ankles wide,  
A bright, thick chain made of discs of tin  
Secured a board from his waist to chin.

The men in the brakes that passed at trot  
Read "First past Post" and "Run or  
Not."

The bookie's face was an angry red,  
His eyes seemed rolling inside his head.  
His clerk was a lean man, secret, spare,  
With thin lips knowing and damp black  
hair.

A big black bag much weathered with rain  
Hung round his neck by a leathered chain.

Seven linked dancers singing a song  
Bowed and kicked as they danced along,  
The middleman thrust and pulled and  
squeezed

A concertina to tunes that pleased.  
After them, honking, with Hey, Hey, Hey,  
Came drivers thrusting to clear the way,  
Drivers vexed by the concertina,

Saying "Go bury that d——d hyena."

Drivers dusty with wind-red faces

Leaning out of their driving-places.

The dancers mocked them and called them  
names:

"Look at our butler," "Drive on, James."

The cars drove past and the dust rose  
after,

Little boys chased them yelling with  
laughter,

Clambering on them when they slowed

For a dirty ride down a perch of road.

A dark green car with a smart drab lining

Passed with a stately pair reclining;

Peering walkers standing aside

Saw Soyland's owner pass with his bride,

Young Sir Eustace, biting his lip,

Pressing his chin with his finger-tip,

Nerves on edge, as he could not choose,

From thought of the bets he stood to lose.

His lady, a beauty whom thought made  
pale,

Prayed from fear that the horse might fail.

A bright brass rod on the motor's bonnet  
Carried her husband's colours on it,  
Scarlet spots on a field of cream:  
She stared ahead in a kind of dream.

Then came cabs from the railway stations,  
Carrying men from all the nations,  
Olive-skinned French with clipped mous-  
taches,

Almond-eyed like Paris apaches.

Rosy French with their faces shining  
From joy of living and love of dining.

Silent Spaniards, merry Italians,

Nobles, commoners, saints, rapscallions;

Russians tense with the quest of truth

That maddens manhood and saddens  
youth;

Learned Norwegians hale and limber,

Brown from the barques new in with  
timber.

Oregon men of six feet seven

With backs from Atlas and hearts from  
Heaven.

Orleans Creoles, ready for duels,  
Their delicate ears with scarlet jewels,  
Green silk handkerchiefs round their  
throats,

In from sea with the cotton boats.

Portuguese and Brazilianos,

Men from the mountains, men from the  
Llanos,

Men from the Pampas, men from the  
Sierras,

Men from the mines of the Cordilleras,

Men from the flats of the tropic mud

Where the butterfly glints his mail with  
blood;

Men from the pass where day by day

The sun's heat scales the rocks away;

Men from the hills where night by night

The sheep-bells give the heart delight;

Indians, Lascars and Bengalese.

Greeks from the mainland, Greeks from the  
seas;

All kinds of bodies, all kinds of faces,

All were coming to see the races,  
Coming to see Sir Lopez run  
And watch the English having their fun.

The Carib boxer from Hispaniola  
Wore a rose in his tilted bowler;  
He drove a car with a yellow panel,  
He went full speed and he drove a channel.

Then came dog-carts and traps and wagons  
With hampers of lunches, pies and flagons,  
Bucks from city and flash young bloods  
With vests "cut saucy" to show their  
studs,

Hawbuck Towler and Spicey Random  
Tooled in style in a rakish tandem.  
Blood Dick Haggit and Bertie Askins  
Had dancers' skirts on their horses' gas-  
kins;

Crash Pete Snounce with that girl of  
Dowser's  
Drove a horse that was wearing trousers;

The waggonette from The Old Pier Head  
Drove to the tune "My Monkey's Dead."

The costermongers as smart as sparrows  
Brought their wives in their donkey  
barrows.

The clean-legged donkeys, clever and cunning,

Their ears cocked forward, their neat feet  
running,

Their carts and harness flapping with flags,  
Were bright as heralds and proud as stags.  
And there in pride in the flapping banners  
Were the costers' selves in blue bandannas,  
And the costers' wives in feathers curling,  
And their sons, with their sweet mouth-  
organs skirling.

And from midst of the road to the roadside  
shifting

The crowd of the world on foot went drifting,

Standing aside on the trodden grass  
To chaff as they let the traffic pass.  
Then back they flooded, singing and cheer-  
ing,  
Plodding forward and disappearing,  
Up to the course to take their places,  
To lunch and gamble and see the races.

The great grand stand, made grey by the  
weather,  
Flaunted colours that tugged their tether;  
Tier upon tier the wooden seats  
Were packed as full as the London streets  
When the King and Queen go by in state.

Click click clack went the turnstile gate;  
The orange-sellers cried "Fat and fine  
Seville oranges, sweet, like wine:  
Twopence apiece, all juice, all juice."  
The pea and the thimble caught their goose.

Two white-faced lurchers, not over-clean,

Urged the passers to "spot the Queen."  
They flicked three cards that the world  
might choose,

They cried "All prizes. You cannot lose.  
Come, pick the lady. Only a shilling."

One of their friends cried out, "I'm willing."

He "picked the lady" and took his pay,  
And he cried, "It's giving money away."

Men came yelling "Cards of the races";  
Men hawked matches and studs and laces;  
Gipsy-women in green shawls dizen'd  
Read girls' fortunes with eyes that glistened;

Negro minstrels on banjos strumming  
Sang at the stiles to people coming.

Like glistening beetles clustered close,  
The myriad motors parked in rows,  
The bonnets flashed, and the brass did  
clink,

As the drivers poured their motors drink.

The March wind blew the smell of the  
crowd,

All men there seemed crying aloud,  
But over the noise a louder roar  
Broke, as the wave that bursts on shore,  
Drowns the roar of the wave that comes,  
So this roar rose on the lesser hums,  
“I back the field. I back the field.”

Man who lives under sentence sealed,  
Tragical man, who has but breath  
For few brief years as he goes to death,  
Tragical man by strange winds blown  
To live in crowds ere he die alone,  
Came in his jovial thousands massing,  
To see Life moving and Beauty passing.

They sucked their fruit in the wooden tiers  
And flung the skins at the passers' ears;  
Drumming their heels on the planks below,  
They sang of Dolly of Idaho.  
Past, like a flash, the first race went.

The time drew by to the great event.

At a quarter to three the big bell pealed;  
The horses trooped to the Saddling Field.  
Covered in clothing, horse and mare  
Pricked their ears at the people there;  
Some showed devil, and some, composure,  
As they trod their way to the great enclosure.

When the clock struck three and the men  
weighed out,  
Charles Cothill shook, though his heart  
was stout.

The thought of his bets, so gaily laid,  
Seemed a stone the more when he sat and  
weighed.

As he swung in the scales and nursed his  
saddle,  
It seemed to him that his brains would  
addle;  
For now that the plunger reached the brink,

The risk was more than he liked to think.

In ten more minutes his future life,  
His hopes of home with his chosen wife,  
Would all depend on a doubtful horse  
In a crowded field over Compton Course.

He had backed Right Royal for all he  
owned.

At thought of his want of sense he groaned.  
“All for a dream of the night,” he thought.  
He was right for weight at eleven naught.

Then Em’s sweet face rose up in his brain,  
He cursed his will that had dealt her pain:  
To hurt sweet Emmy and lose her love  
Was madman’s folly by all above.  
He saw too well as he crossed the yard  
That his madman’s plunge had borne her  
hard.

“To wring sweet Em like her drunken  
father,

I’d fall at the Pitch and end it rather.

Oh I hope, hope, hope, that her golden  
heart

Will give me a word before I start.

If I thought our love should have come to  
wreck,

I'd pull Right Royal and break my neck,  
And Monkery's shoe might kick my brains  
out

That my own heart's blood might wash  
my stains out.

But even if Emmy, my sweet, forgive,  
I'm a ruined man, so I need not live,  
For I've backed my horse with my all, by  
Heaven,  
To be first in a field of thirty-seven,  
And good as he is, the dream's a lie."

He saw no hope, but to fall and die.

As he left the room for the Saddling Pad-  
dock

He looked as white as the flesh of haddock.  
But Love, all seeing, though painted blind,

Makes wisdom live in a woman's mind:  
His love knew well from her own heart's  
    bleeding  
The word of help that her man was need-  
    ing;  
And there she stood with her eyes most  
    bright,  
Ready to cheer her heart's delight.

She said, "My darling, I feel so proud  
To see you followed by all the crowd;  
And I shall be proud as I see you win.

Right Royal, Soyland and Peterkin  
Are the three I pick, first, second, third.  
And oh, now listen to what I heard.  
Just now in the park Sir Norman Cooking  
Said, 'Harding, how well Right Royal's  
    looking.

They've brought him on in the ring, they  
    say.'

John said, 'Sir Norman, to-day's his day.'  
And Sir Norman said, 'If I had a monkey  
I'd put it on yours, for he looks so spunky.'

So you see that the experts think as you.  
Now, my own own own, may your dream  
    come true,  
As I know it will, as I know it must;  
You have all my prayer and my love and  
    trust.

Oh, one thing more that Sir Norman said,  
‘A lot of money has just been laid  
On the mare Gavotte that no one knows.’  
He said ‘She’s small, but, my word, she  
    goes.

Since she bears no weight, if she only  
    jumps,  
She’ll put these cracks to their ace of  
    trumps.

But,’ he said, ‘she’s slight for a course  
    like this.’

That’s all my gossip, so there it is.

Dear, reckon the words I spoke unspoken,  
I failed in love and my heart is broken.

Now I go to my place to blush with pride  
As the people talk of how well you ride;  
I mean'to shout like a bosun's mate  
When I see you lead coming up the straight.  
Now may all God's help be with you, dear."

"Well, bless you, Em, for your words of  
cheer.

And now is the woodcock near the gin.  
Good-bye.

Now, Harding, we'd best begin."

At buckle and billet their fingers wrought,  
Till the sheets were home and the bowlines  
taut.

As he knotted the reins and took his stand  
The horse's soul came into his hand  
And up from the mouth that held the steel  
Came an innermost word, half thought,  
half feel,

"My day to-day, O master, O master;  
None shall jump cleaner, none shall go  
faster,

Call till you kill me, for I'll obey,  
It's my day to-day, it's my day to-day."

In a second more he had found his seat,  
And the standers-by jumped clear of feet,  
For the big dark bay all fire and fettle  
Had his blood in a dance to show his mettle.  
Charles soothed him down till his tricks  
were gone;  
Then he leaned for a final word from John.

John Harding's face was alert and grim,  
From under his hand he talked to him.  
"It's none of my business, sir," he said,  
"What you stand to win or the bets you've  
made,  
But the rumour goes that you've backed  
your horse.

Now you need no telling of Compton  
Course.

It's a dangerous course at the best of  
times,

But on days like this some jumps are  
crimes;

With a field like this, nigh forty starting,  
After one time round it'll need re-charting.

Now think it a hunt, the first time round;  
Don't think too much about losing ground,  
Lie out of your ground, for sure as trumps  
There'll be people killed in the first three  
jumps.

The second time round, pipe hands for  
boarding,

You can see what's doing and act accord-  
ing.

Now your horse is a slug and a sulker too,  
Your way with the horse I leave to you;  
But, sir, you watch for these joker's tricks  
And watch that devil on number six;

There's nothing he likes like playing it  
low,

What a horse mayn't like or a man mayn't  
know,

And what they love when they race a toff  
Is to flurry his horse at taking off.

The ways of the crook are hard to learn.

Now watch that fence at the outer turn;  
It looks so slight but it's highly like  
That it's killed more men than the Dyers'  
Dyke.

It's down in a dip and you turn to take it,  
And men in a bunch, just there, mistake it.  
But well to the right, it's firmer ground,  
And the quick way there is the long way  
round.

In Cannibal's year, in just this weather,  
There were five came down at that fence  
together.

I called it murder, not riding races.

You've nothing to fear from the other  
places,

Your horse can jump.

Now I'll say no more.

They say you're on, as I said before.

It's none of my business, sir, but still

I would like to say that I hope you will.

Sir, I wish you luck. When we two next  
meet

I hope to hear how you had them beat."

Charles Cothill nodded with, "Thank you,  
John.

We'll try; and, oh, you're a thousand on."

He heard John's thanks, but knew at a  
glance

That John was sure that he stood no  
chance.

He turned Right Royal, he drew deep  
breath

With the thought "Now for it; a ride to  
death."

"Now come, my beauty, for dear Em's  
sake,

And if come you can't, may our necks both  
break."

And there to his front, with their riders  
stooping

For the final word, were the racers troop-  
ing.

Out at the gate to cheers and banter  
They paced in pride to begin their canter.

Muscatel with the big white star,  
The roan Red Ember, and Kubbadar,

Kubbadar with his teeth bared yellow  
At the Dakkanese, his stable-fellow.  
Then Forward-Ho, then a chestnut weed,  
Skysail, slight, with a turn of speed.  
The neat Gavotte under black and coral,

Then the Mutineer, Lord Leybourne's  
sorrel,

Natuna mincing, Syringa sidling,  
Stormalong fighting to break his bridling,  
Thunderbolt dancing with raw nerves  
quick,

Trying a savage at Bitter Dick.

The Ranger (winner three years before),  
Now old, but ready for one try more;  
Hadrian; Thankful; the stable-cronies,  
Peterkinooks and Dear Adonis;  
The flashing Rocket, with taking action;  
Exception, backed by the Tencombe  
faction;

Old Sir Francis and young King Tony,  
Culverin striding from great hips bony.

At this, he rode through the open gate  
Into the course to try his fate.

He heard a roar from a moving crowd;  
Right Royal kindled and cried aloud.  
There was the course, stand, rail and pen,

Peopled with seventy thousand men;  
Seventy thousand faces staring,  
Carriages parked, a brass band blaring:  
Over the stand the flags in billows  
Bent their poles like the wands of willows.  
All men there seemed trying to bawl,  
Yet a few great voices topped them all:  
"I back the field! I back the field!"

Right Royal trembled with pride and  
squealed.

Charles Cothill smiled with relief to find  
This roaring crowd to his horse's mind.

He passed the stand where his lady stood,  
His nerves were tense to the multitude;  
His blood beat hard and his eyes grew dim  
As he knew that some were cheering him.  
Then, as he turned, at his pace's end  
There came a roar as when floods descend.  
All down the straight from the crowded  
stands

Came the yells of voices and clap of  
hands,

For with bright bay beauty that shone like  
flame

The favourite horse Sir Lopez came.

His beautiful hips and splendid shoulders  
And power of stride moved all beholders,  
Moved non-bettors to try to bet

On that favourite horse not beaten yet.

With glory of power and speed he strode  
To a sea of cheering that moved and  
flowed

And followed and heaped and burst like  
storm

From the joy of men in the perfect form;  
Cheers followed his path both sides the  
course.

Charles Cothill sighed when he saw that  
horse.

The cheering died, then a burst of clapping

Met Soyland's coming all bright from  
strapping,

A big dark brown who was booted thick  
Lest one of the jumps should make him  
click.

He moved very big, he'd a head like a  
fiddle,

He seemed all ends without any middle,  
But ill as he looked, that outcast racer  
Was a rare good horse and a perfect chaser.

Then The Ghost came on, then Meringue,  
the bay,

Then proud Grey Glory, the dapple-grey;  
The splendid grey brought a burst of  
cheers.

Then Cimmeroon, who had tried for  
years

And had thrice been placed and had once  
been fourth,

Came trying again the proverb's worth.

Then again, like a wave as it runs a pier,  
On and on, unbroken, there came a cheer

As Monkery, black as a collier-barge,  
Trode sideways, bickering, taking charge.  
Cross-Molin, from the Blowbury, followed,  
Lucky Shot skipped, Coranto wallowed,  
Then Counter Vair, the declared-to-win,  
Stable-fellow of Cross-Molin;  
Culverin last, with Cannonade,  
Formed rearguard to the grand parade.

And now, as they turned to go to post,  
The Skysail calfishly barged The Ghost,  
The Ghost lashed out with a bitter knock  
On the tender muscle of Skysail's hock,  
And Skysail's hope of that splendid hour  
Was cut off short like a summer flower.  
From the cantering crowd he limped apart  
Back to the Paddock and did not start.

As they cantered down, Charles Cothill's  
mind  
Was filled with joy that his horse went  
kind;  
He showed no sulks, no sloth, no fear,

But leant on his rein and pricked his ear.  
They lined themselves at the Post to start,  
Charles took his place with a thumping  
heart.

Excitement running in waves took hold,  
His teeth were chattered, his hands were  
cold,  
His joy to be there was mixed with dread  
To be left at post when they shot ahead.  
The horses sparred as though drunk with  
wine,  
They bickered and snatched at taking line.

Then a grey-haired man with a hawklike  
face  
Read from a list each rider's place.  
Sitting astride his pommely hack,  
He ordered them up or sent them back;  
He bade them heed that they jump their  
nags  
Over every jump between the flags.

Here Kubbadar, who was pulling double,  
Went sideways, kicking and raising  
trouble,

Monkery seconded, kicking and biting,  
Thunderbolt followed by starting fighting.

The starter eyed them and gave the order  
That the three wild horses keep the border,  
With men to hold them to keep them quiet.  
Boys from the stables stopped their riot.  
Out of the line to the edge of the field,  
The three wild biters and kickers wheeled;  
Then the rest edged up and pawed and  
bickered,

Reached at their reins and snatched and  
snickered,

Flung white foam as they stamped their  
hate

Of passionate blood compelled to wait.

Then the starter shouted to Charles, "Good  
heaven,

This isn't a circus, you on Seven."

For Royal squirmed like a box of tricks  
And Coranto's rider, the number Six,  
Cursed at Charles for a green young fool  
Who ought to be at a riding school.

After a minute of swerves and shoving,  
A line like a half-moon started moving,  
Then Rocket and Soyland leaped to stride,  
To be pulled up short and wheeled to side.

Then the trickier riders started thrusting,  
Judging the starter's mind too trusting;  
But the starter said, "You know quite  
clearly  
That isn't allowed; though you'd like it  
dearly."

Then Cannonade made a sideways bolt  
That gave Exception an ugly jolt.  
Then the line, reformed, broke all to pieces.

Then the line reforms, and the tumult  
ceases.

Each man sits tense though his racer  
dances;

In a slow, jerked walk the line advances.

And then in a flash, more felt than seen,  
The flag shot down and the course showed  
green,

And the line surged forwards and all that  
glory

Of speed was sweeping to make a story.

One second before, Charles Cothill's mind  
Had been filled with fear to be left behind,  
But now with a rush, as when hounds leave  
cover,

The line broke up and his fear was over.

A glimmer of bay behind The Ghost  
Showed Dear Adonis still there at post.  
Out to the left, a joy to his backer,

Kubbadar led the field a cracker,  
The thunder of horses, all fit and foaming,  
Made the blood not care whether death  
were coming.

A glimmer of silks, blue, white, green, red,  
Flashed into his eye and went ahead;  
Then hoof-casts scattered, then rushing  
horses

Passed at his side with all their forces.  
His blood leapt up but his mind said "No,  
Steady, my darling, slow, go slow.  
In the first time round this ride's a hunt."

The Turk's Grave Fence made a line in  
front.

Long years before, when the race began,  
That first of the jumps had maimed a man;  
His horse, the Turk, had been killed and  
buried

There in the ditch by horse-hoofs herried;  
And over the poor Turk's bones at pace

Now, every year, there goes the race,  
And many a man makes doctor's work  
At the thorn-bound ditch that hides the  
    Turk,  
And every man as he rides that course  
Thinks, there, of the Turk, that good old  
    horse.

The thick thorn-fence stands five feet high,  
With a ditch beyond unseen by eye,  
Which a horse must guess from his urgent  
    rider  
Pressing him there to jump it wider.

And being so near both Stand and Post,  
Out of all the jumps men haunt it most,  
And there, with the crowd, and the  
    undulled nerves,  
The old horse balks and the young horse  
    swerves,  
And the good horse falls with the bad on  
    top  
And beautiful boldness comes to stop.

Charles saw the rush of the leading black,  
And the forehands lift and the men sway  
back;

He steadied his horse, then with crash and  
crying

The top of the Turk's Grave Fence went  
flying.

Round in a flash, refusing danger,  
Came the Lucky Shot right into Ranger;  
Ranger swerving knocked Bitter Dick,  
Who blundered at it and leaped too quick;  
Then crash went blackthorn as Bitter  
Dick fell,

Meringue jumped on him and rolled as  
well.

As Charles got over he splashed the dirt  
Of the poor Turk's grave on two men hurt.

Right Royal landed. With cheers and  
laughter

Some horses passed him and some came  
after;

A fine brown horse strode up beside him,  
It was Thankful running with none to ride  
him;

Thankful's rider, dizzy and sick,  
Lay in the mud by Bitter Dick.

In front, was the curving street of Course,  
Barred black by the leaps unsmashed by  
horse.

A cloud blew by and the sun shone bright,  
Showing the guard-rails gleaming white.  
Little red flags, that gusts blew tense,  
Streamed to the wind at each black fence.

And smiting the turf to clods that scattered  
Was the rush of the race, the thing that  
mattered,

A tide of horses in fury flowing,  
Beauty of speed in glory going,  
Kubbadar pulling, romping first,  
Like a big black fox that had made his  
burst.

And away and away and away they went,  
A visible song of what life meant.  
Living in houses, sleeping in bed,  
Going to business, all seemed dead,  
Dead as death to that rush in strife  
Pulse for pulse with the heart of life.

“For to all,” Charles thought, “when the  
    blood beats high  
Comes the glimpse of that which may not  
    die;  
When the world is stilled, when the want-  
    ing dwindles,  
When the mind takes light and the spirit  
    kindles,  
One stands on a peak of this old earth.”

Charles eyed his horses and sang with  
    mirth.

What of this world that spins through  
    space?

With red blood running he rode a race,  
The beast's red spirit was one with his,  
Emulous and in ecstasies;  
Joy that from heart to wild heart passes  
In the wild things going through the  
grasses;

In the hares in the corn, in shy gazelles  
Running the sand where no man dwells;  
In horses scared at the prairie spring;  
In the dun deer noiseless, hurrying;  
In fish in the dimness scarcely seen,  
Save as shadows shooting in a shaking  
green;

In birds in the air, neck-straining, swift,  
Wing touching wing while no wings shift,  
Seen by none, but when stars appear  
A reaper wandering home may hear  
A sigh aloft where the stars are dim,  
Then a great rush going over him:  
This was his; it had linked him close

To the force by which the comet goes,  
With the rein none sees, with the lash none  
feels,  
But with fire-mane tossing and flashing  
heels.

The roar of the race-course died behind  
them,  
In front were their Fates, they rode to  
find them,  
With the wills of men, with the strengths  
of horses,  
They dared the minute with all their forces.

## PART II



Still pulling double, black Kubbadar led,  
Pulling his rider half over his head;  
Soyland's cream jacket was spotted with  
    red,  
Spotted with dirt from the rush of their  
    tread.

Bright bay Sir Lopez, the loveliest there,  
Galloped at ease as though taking the air,  
Well in his compass with plenty to spare.  
Gavotte and The Ghost and the brown  
    Counter Vair,  
Followed him close with Syringa the mare,  
And the roan horse Red Ember who went  
    like a hare,  
And Forward-Ho bolting, though his rider  
    did swear.

Keeping this order, they reached the next  
    fence,  
Which was living plashed blackthorn with  
    gorse-toppings dense;

In the gloom of its darkness it loomed up  
immense.

And Forward-Ho's glory had conquered  
his sense

And he rushed it, not rising, and never  
went thence.

And down in the ditch where the gorse-  
spikes were scattered,

That bright chestnut's soul from his body  
was shattered,

And his rider shed tears on the dear head  
all spattered.

King Tony came down, but got up with a  
stumble,

His rider went sideways, but knew how to  
tumble,

And got up and remounted, though the  
pain made him humble,

And he rode fifty yards and then stopped  
in a fumble.

With a rush and a crashing Right Royal  
went over

With the stride of a stalwart and the blood  
of a lover,

He landed on stubble now pushing with  
clover.

And just as he landed, the March sun shone  
bright

And the blue sky showed flamelike and the  
dun clouds turned white;

The little larks panted aloft their delight,  
Trembling and singing as though one with  
the light.

And Charles, as he rode, felt the joy of  
their singing,

While over the clover the horses went  
stringing,

And up from Right Royal the message  
came winging,

“It is my day to-day, though the pace may  
be stinging,

Though the jumps be all danger and the  
going all clinging."

The white, square church-tower with its  
weather-cocks swinging,

Rose up on the right above grass and dark  
plough

Where the elm trees' black branches had  
bud on the bough.

Riderless Thankful strode on at his side,  
His bright stirrup-irons flew up at each  
stride,

Being free, in this gallop, had filled him  
with pride.

Charles thought, "What would come, if  
he ran out or shied?

I wish from my heart that the brute would  
keep wide."

Coranto drew up on Right Royal's near  
quarter,

Beyond lay a hurdle and ditch full of  
water.

And now as they neared it, Right Royal  
took heed  
Of the distance to go and the steps he  
would need;  
He cocked to the effort with eyes bright  
as gleed,  
Then Coranto's wide wallow shot past him  
at speed:  
His rider's "Hup, hup, now!" called out  
quick and cheerly,  
Sent him over in style, but Right Royal  
jumped early.

Just a second too soon, and from some feet  
too far,  
Charles learned the mistake as he struck  
the top bar;  
Then the water flashed skywards, the earth  
gave a jar,  
And the man on Coranto looked back with  
"Aha!

That'll teach you, my son." Then with  
    straining of leather,  
Grey Glory and Monkery landed together.

For a second the stunning kept Charles  
    from his pain,  
Then his sense flooded back, making every-  
    thing plain.

He was down on the mud, but he still held  
    the rein;  
Right Royal was heaving his haunch from  
    the drain.

The field was ahead of him, going like rain,  
And though the plough held them, they  
    went like the wind  
To the eyes of a man left so badly behind.

Charles climbed to his feet as Right Royal  
    crawled out,  
He said, "That's extinction beyond any  
    doubt."

On the plough, on and on, went the rush of  
    the rout.

Charles mounted and rode, for his courage  
was stout,  
And he would not give in till the end of the  
bout,  
But plastered with poachings he rode on  
forsaken:  
He had lost thirty lengths and his horse  
had been shaken.

Across the wet ploughland he took a good  
pull,  
With the thought that the cup of his sor-  
row was full,  
For the speed of a stag and the strength  
of a bull  
Could hardly recover the ground he had  
lost.  
Right Royal went dully, then snorted and  
tost,

Tost his head, with a whicker, went on,  
and went kind,

And the horse's great spirit touched  
Charles in the mind.

Though his bruise made him dizzy and  
tears made him blind,

He would try to the finish, and so they  
should find.

He was last, thirty lengths. Here he took  
in his sails,

For the field had come crash at the white  
post and rails.

Here Sir Francis ran out, scaring all who  
stood near,

Going crash through the rail like a runa-  
way deer.

Then the riderless Thankful upset Muti-  
neer,

Dakkanese, in refusing, wheeled round like  
a top

Into Culverin's shoulder which made them  
both stop.

They reeled from the shock, slithered side-  
ways, and crashed,

Dakkanese on the guard-rail which gave,  
and then smashed.

As he rolled, the near shoes of the Culverin  
flashed

High in air for a moment, bright iron in  
strain:

Then he rose with no rider and tripped in  
his rein.

Right Royal came up as the Dakkanese  
rose

All trembling and cowed as though beaten  
with blows;

The Culverin stumbled with the reins in  
his toes;

On the far side the leap stood the Mutineer  
grazing,

His man was a heap which some fellows  
were raising.

Right Royal strode on, through a second  
wet plough,

With the field far ahead (Kubbadar in  
the bow).

Charles thought, "Kubbadar's got away  
from him now.

Well, it's little to me, for they're so far  
ahead

That they'll never come back, though I  
ride myself dead."

Right Royal bored forward and leaned on  
his hand,

"Good boy," said his master. "He must  
understand.

You're the one friend I'll have when I've  
sold all my land.

God pity my Em as we come past the Stand,  
Last of all, and all muddy; but now for  
Jim's Pitch."

Four feet of gorse fence, then a fifteen foot  
ditch.

And the fifteen foot ditch glittered bright  
to the brim

With the brook that ran through it where  
the grayling did swim;

In the shallows it sparkled, in the deeps it  
was dim,

When the race was first run it had nearly  
drowned Jim,

And now the bright irons of twenty-four  
horses

Were to flicker its ripples with knockings  
of gorses.

From far in the rear Charles could watch  
them take hold

Of their horses and push them across the  
light mould;

How their ears all cocked forward, how  
the drumming hoofs rolled!

Kubbadar, far ahead, flew across like a  
bird,

Then Soyland, bad second, with Muscatel  
third.

Then Sir Lopez, and Path Finder, striding  
alone,

Then the good horse, Red Ember, the flea-  
bitten roan.

Then the little Gavotte bearing less than  
ten stone.

Then a crowd of all colours with Peter-  
kinooks

Going strong as a whale goes, head up and  
out flukes.

And then as Charles watched, as the shoul-  
ders went back,

The riderless Thankful swerved left off the  
track,

Crossing just to the front of the Cimmeroon  
black.

Ere the rider could see what his horse was  
about,

Cimmeroon swerved, like Thankful, and  
followed him out.

Across the great grass in the midst of the  
course

Cimmeroon ran a match race with the riderless horse,

Then the rider took charge, part by skill  
part by force;

He turned Cimmeroon to re-enter the race  
Seven lengths behind Charles in the post  
of disgrace.

Beyond the next fence, at the top of a slope,  
Charles saw his field fading and gave up  
all hope.

Yet he said, "Any error will knot me my  
rope.

I wish that some power would help me to  
see

What would give the best chance for Right  
Royal and me.

Shall I hurry downhill, to catch up when  
I can?

Being last is the devil for horse and for  
man,

For it makes the horse slack and it makes  
the man sick.

Well, I've got to decide and I've got to be  
quick.

I had better catch up, for if I should be  
last,

It would kill my poor Emmy to see me  
come past.

I cannot leave Emmy to suffer like that,  
So I'll hurry downhill and then pull on  
the flat."

So he thought, so he settled, but then, as  
he stirred,

Right Royal's ears moved like a vicious  
man's word;

So he thought, "If I try it, the horse will  
refuse."

So he gave up the project and shook in his  
shoes.

Then he thought, "Since the horse will not  
stand interference,

I must even sit quiet and sink the appear-  
ance,

Since his nerves have been touched, it's as  
well we're alone."

He turned down the hill with his heart like  
a stone.

"But," he cried, "they'll come back, for  
they've gone such a burst

That they'll all soon be panting, in need  
to be nursed,

They will surely come back, but to wait  
till they do,

Lord, it's hell to the waiter, it cuts a man  
through."

Then into his mind came the Avalon case,  
When a man, left at post, without hope of  
a place,

First had suffered in patience, then had  
wormed his way up,

Then had come with fine judgment, and  
just won the Cup.

Hoofs thundered behind him, the Cim-  
meroon caught him,

His man cursing Thankful and the sire  
who wrought him.

“Did you see that brown devil?” he cried  
as he passed;

“He carried me out, but I’ll never be last.

Just the wrong side the water the brute  
gave a swerve,

And he carried me out, half across the  
course-curve.

Look, he’s cut right across now, we’ll meet  
him again.

Well, I hope someone knocks him and kicks  
out his brain.

Well, I’ll never be last, though I can’t win  
the Cup.

No sense lolling here, man, you'd better  
pull up."

Then he roused Cimmeroon, and was off  
like a swallow.

Charles watched, sick at heart, with a long-  
ing to follow.

"Better follow," he thought, "for he  
knows more than I,

Since he rode here before, and it's wiser  
to try:

Would my horse had but wings, would his  
feet would but lift;

Would we spun on this speedway as wind  
spins the drift.

There they go out of sight, over fence, to  
the Turn;

They are going still harder, they leave me  
astern.

They will never come back, I am lost past  
recall.”

So he cried for a comfort and only gat gall.

In the glittering branches of the world  
without end,

Were the spirits, Em's Helper and Charles  
Cothill's Friend,

And the Force of Right Royal with a crinier  
of flame

There they breathed the bright glory till  
the summoning came.

From the Stand where Em watched, from  
the field where Charles rode,

From the mud where Right Royal in soli-  
tude strode,

Came the call of three spirits to the spirits  
that guard,

Crying, “Up now, and help him, for the  
danger bears hard.”

There they looked, those immortals, from  
the boughs dropping balm,  
But their powers were stirred not, and  
their grave brows were calm,  
For they said, "He's despairing and the  
horse is still vexed."  
Charles cleared Channing's Blackthorn and  
strode to the next.

The next was the Turn in a bogland of  
rushes;  
There the springs of still water were  
trampled to slushes;  
The peewits lamented, flapping down, flag-  
ging far,  
The riders dared deathwards each trusting  
his star.

The mud made them slither, the turn made  
them close,  
The stirrup steels clinked as they thrust  
in their toes,

The brown horse Exception was struck as  
    he rose,  
Struck to earth by the Rocket, then kicked  
    by the grey,  
Then Thunderbolt smote him and rolled  
    him astray.

The man on Exception, Bun Manor, fell  
    clear  
With Monkery's shoes half an inch from  
    his ear,  
A drench of wet mud from the hoofs struck  
    his cheek,  
But the race was gone from him before he  
    could speak.

There Exception and Thunderbolt ended  
    their race,  
Their bright flanks all smeared with the  
    mud of the place;  
In the green fields of Tencombe and the  
    grey downs of Churn

Their names had been glories till they fell  
at the Turn.

Em prayed in her place that her lover might  
know

Not to hurry Right Royal but let him go  
slow;

White-lipped from her praying, she sat,  
with shut eyes,

Begging help from her Helper, the death-  
less, the wise.

From the gold of his branches her Helper  
took heed,

He sent forth a thought to help Charles in  
his need.

As the white, gleaming gannet eyes fish in  
the sea,

So the thought sought a mortal to bring  
this to be.

By the side of Exception Bun Manor now  
stood

Sopping rags on a hock that was dripping  
bright blood.

He had known Charles of old and defeat  
made him kind,

The thought from the Helper came into his  
mind.

So he cried to Charles Cothill, "Go easy,"  
he cried,

"Don't hurry; don't worry; sit still and  
keep wide.

They flowed like the Severn, they'll ebb  
like the tide.

They'll come back and you'll catch them."  
His voice died away.

In front lay the Dyke, deep as drowning,  
steel grey.

Charles felt his horse see it and stir at the  
sight.

Again his heart lifted to the dream of the  
night;

Once again in his heart's blood the horse  
seemed to say,  
"I'll die or I'll do it. It's my day to-day."

He saw the grey water in shade from its  
fence,  
The rows of white faces all staring intense;  
All the heads straining forward, all the  
shoulders packt dense.  
Beyond, he saw Thankful, the riderless  
brown,  
Snatching grass, dodging capture, with  
reins hanging down.

Then Thankful stopped eating and cocked  
up his head,  
He eyed the swift horses that Kubbadar  
led,  
His eye filled with fire at the roll of their  
tread;  
Then he tore down the course with a flash  
of bright shoes,

As the race's bright herald on fire with  
news.

As Charles neared the water, the Rocket  
ran out

By jumping the railings and kicking a clout  
Of rotten white woodwork to startle the  
trout.

When Charles cleared the water, the grass  
stretcht before

And the glory of going burned in to the  
core.

Far over his head with a whicker of wings  
Came a wisp of five snipe from a field full  
of springs;

The gleam on their feathers went wavering  
past——

And then some men booed him for being  
the last.

But last though he was, all his blood was  
on fire

With the rush of the wind and the gleam  
of the mire,  
And the leap of his heart to the skylarks in  
quire,  
And the feel of his horse going onward,  
on, on,  
Under sky with white banners and bright  
sun that shone.

Like a star in the night, like a spring in the  
waste,  
The image of Emmy rose up as he raced,  
Till his mind was made calm, and his spirit  
was braced.  
For the prize was bright Emmy; his blood  
beat and beat  
As her beauty made music in that thunder  
of feet.

The wind was whirled past him, it hummed  
in his ears,

Right Royal's excitement had banished his  
fears,  
For his leap was like singing, his stride  
was like cheers,  
All his blood was in glory, all his soul was  
blown bare,  
They were one, blood and purpose, they  
strode through the air.

“What is life if I lose her, what is death if  
I win?

At the end of this living the new lives begin.  
Whatever life may be, whatever death is,  
I am spirit eternal, I am this, I am this!”

Girls waved, and men shouted, like flashes,  
like shots,  
Out of pale blurs of faces whose features  
were dots;  
Two fences with toppings were cleared  
without hitch,  
Then they ran for Lost Lady's, a fence and  
dry ditch.

Here Monkery's rider, on seeing a chance,  
Shot out beyond Soyland to lead the advance.

Then he steadied and summed up his field  
with a glance.

All crossed the Lost Lady's, that dry ditch  
of fear,

Then a roar broke about them, the race-  
course was near.

Right and left were the swing-boats and  
merry-go-rounds,

Yellow varnish that wavered, machines  
making sounds,

Rifles cracking like cork-pops, fifes whin-  
ing with steam,

"All hot," from a pieman; all blurred as  
in dream.

Then the motors, then cheering, then the  
brass of a band,

Then the white rails all crowded with a  
mob on each hand.

Then they swerved to the left over gorse-  
bush and hurdle  
And they rushed for the Water where a  
man's blood might curdle.

Charles entered the race-course and prayed  
in his mind  
That love for the moment might make  
Emmy blind,  
Not see him come past half a distance  
behind;  
For an instant he thought, "I must shove  
on ahead,  
For to pass her like this, Lord, I'd rather  
be dead."

Then, in crossing the hurdle the Stand  
arose plain,  
All the flags, horns and cheers beat like  
blows on his brain,  
And he thought, "Time to race when I  
come here again,

If I once lose my head, I'll be lost past  
appeal."

All the crowd flickered past like a film on  
a reel.

Like a ribbon, whirled past him, all painted  
with eyes.

All the real, as he rode, was the horse at  
his thighs,

And the thought "They'll come back, if  
I've luck, if I'm wise."

Some banners uncrumpled on the blue of  
the skies,

The cheers became frantic, the blur of men  
shook,

As Thankful and Kubbadar went at the  
brook.

Neck and neck, stride for stride, they in-  
creased as they neared it,

Though the danger gleamed greyly, they  
galloped to beard it;

And Kubbadar dwelt on his jump as he  
cleared it,

While Thankful went on with a half a  
length lead.

Charles thought, "Kubbadar, there, is  
going to seed."

Then Monkery took it, then Soyland, then  
two,

Muscatel and Sir Lopez, who leaped not but  
flew,

Like a pair of June swallows going over  
the dew,

Like a flight of bright fishes from a field  
of seas blue,

Like a wisp of snipe wavering in the dusk  
out of view.

Then Red Ember, Path Finder, Gavotte  
and Coranto,

Then The Ghost going level by Syringa  
a-taunto,

Then Peterkinooks, then the Cimmeroon  
black,

Who had gone to his horses, not let them  
come back;

Then Stormalong rousing, then the Blow-  
bury crack,

Counter Vair, going grandly beside Cross-  
Molin,

All charged the bright brook and Coranto  
went in.

Natuna, Grey Glory and Hadrian followed,  
Flying clear of the water where Coranto  
now wallowed;

Cannonade leaped so big that the lookers-  
on holloed.

Ere the splash from Coranto was bright on  
the grass,

The face of the water had seen them all  
pass.

But Coranto half scrambled, then slipped  
on his side,  
Then churned in the mud till the brook was  
all dyed;  
As Charles reached the water Coranto's  
man cried,  
"Put him at it like blazes and give him a  
switch;  
Jump big, man, for God's sake, I'm down  
in the ditch."

Right Royal went at it and streamed like a  
comet,  
And the next thing Charles knew, he was  
twenty yards from it;  
And he thought about Em as he rushed past  
her place,  
With a prayer for God's peace on her beau-  
tiful face.

Then he tried to keep steady. "O steady,"  
he said,

“I’m riding with judgment, not leading a  
raid,

And I’m getting excited, and there’s Can-  
nonade.

What’s the matter?” he shouted, as Royal  
swept past.

“Sprained!” shouted the man, “Over-  
jumped, at the last.”

“Rough luck,” shouted Charles. Then the  
crowd dropped away,

Then the sun shone behind him, the bright  
turned to grey;

They were round, the first time, they were  
streaming away

For the second time round. There the start-  
ing-post shone.

Then they swung round the curve and went  
galloping on.

All the noise died behind, Fate was waiting  
in front,

Now the racing began, they had done with  
the hunt.

With the sunlight behind him Charles saw  
how they went;

No nearer, but further, and only one spent.

Only Kubbadar dwelling, the rest going  
strong,

Taking jump after jump as a bird takes a  
song,

Their thirty lengths' lead seemed a weary  
way long,

It seemed to grow longer, it seemed to  
increase:

"This is bitter," he said. "May it be for  
my peace.

My dream was a glimpse of the world  
beyond sense,

All beauty and wisdom are messages  
thence.

There the difference of bodies and the strain  
of control  
Are removed; beast with man speaks, and  
spirit with soul.

My vision was wisdom, or the World as it  
Is.

Fate rules us, not Wisdom, whose ways  
are not his,  
Fate, weaponed with all things, has willed  
that I fall;  
So be it, Fate orders, and we go to the wall.

Go down to the beaten, who have come to  
the truth  
That is deeper than sorrow and stronger  
than youth,  
That is God, the foundation, who sees and  
is just  
To the beauty within us who are nothing  
but dust.

Yet, Royal, my comrade, before Fate  
decides,  
His hand stays, uncertain, like the sea  
between tides,  
Then a man has a moment, if he strike not  
too late,  
When his soul shakes the world-soul, and  
can even change Fate.

So you and I, Royal, before we give in  
Will spend blood and soul in our effort to  
win,  
And if all be proved vain when our effort  
is sped,  
May the hoofs of our conquerors trample  
us dead."

Then the soul of Right Royal thrilled up  
through each hand,  
"We are one, for this gallop; we both un-  
derstand.  
If my lungs give me breathing, if my loins  
stand the strain,

You may lash me to strips and it shan't be  
in vain.

For to-day, in this hour, my Power will  
come

From my Past to my Present (and a Spirit  
gives some).

We have gone many gallops, we two, in  
the past,

When I go with my Power you will know  
me at last.

You remember the morning when the red  
leaf hung still,

When they found in the beech-clump on  
Lollingdon Hill,

When we led past the Sheep Fold and along  
the Fair Mile?

When I go with my Power, that will not  
seem worth while.

Then the day in the valley when we found  
in the wood,

When we led all the gallop to the river in  
flood,  
And the sun burst out shining as the fox  
took the stream,  
When I go with my Power, that will all  
seem a dream.

Then the day on the Downland when we  
went like the light  
From the spring by Hurst Compton till the  
Clump was in sight,  
Till we killed by The Romans, where Blow-  
bury is,  
All the best of that gallop shall be nothing  
to this.

If I failed in the past with my Power away,  
I was only my shadow, it was not my day,  
So I sulked like my sire, or shrank, like  
my dam;  
Now I come to my Power you will know  
what I am.

I've the strength, you've the brain, we are  
running as one

And nothing on earth can be lost till it's  
won.

If I live to the end, naught shall put you  
to shame."

So he thrilled, going flame-like, with a  
crinier of flame.

"Yet," he thrilled, "It may be, that before  
the end come

Death will touch me, the Changer, and  
carry me home.

For we know not, O master, when our life  
shall have rest,

But the Life is near change that has uttered  
its best.

If we grow like the grasses, we fall like  
the flower,

And I know, I touch Death when I come to  
my Power."

Now over the course flew invisible birds,  
All the Wants of the Watchers, all the  
thoughts and winged words,  
Swift as floatings of fire from a bonfire's  
crest

When they burn leaves on Kimble and the  
fire streams west,

Bright an instant, then dying, but renewed  
and renewed,

So the thoughts chased the racers like  
hounds that pursued,

Bringing cheer to their darlings, bringing  
curse to their foes,

Searching into men's spirits till their  
Powers arose.

Red and rigid the Powers of the riding men  
were,

And as sea birds on Ailsa, in the nesting  
time there,

Rise like leaves in a whirlwind and float  
like leaves blown,

So the wants chased the riders and fought  
for their own.

Unseen by the riders, from the myriad  
tense brains  
Came the living thoughts flying to clutch  
at men's reins,  
Clearing paths for their darlings by running in cry  
At the heads of their rivals till the darlings  
gat by

As in football, when forwards heave all in  
a pack,  
With their arms round each other and their  
heels heeling back,  
And their bodies all straining, as they  
heave, and men fall,  
And the halves hover hawklike to pounce  
on the ball,

And the runners poise ready, while the  
mass of hot men

Heaves and slips, like rough bullocks mak-  
ing play in a pen,  
And the crowd sees the heaving, and is  
still, till it break,  
So the riders endeavoured as they strained  
for the stake.

They skimmed through the grassland, they  
came to the plough,  
The wind rushed behind them like the  
waves from a prow,  
The clods rose behind them with speckles  
of gold  
From the iron-crusht coltsfoot flung up  
from the mould.

All green was the plough with the thrusts  
of young corn,  
Pools gleamed in the ruts that the cart-  
wheels had worn,  
And Kubbadar's man wished he had not  
been born.

Natuna was weary and dwelt on her stride,  
Grey Glory's grey tail rolled about, side  
to side.

Then swish, came a shower, from a driving  
grey cloud

Though the blue sky shone brightly and  
the larks sang aloud.

As the squall of rain pelted, the coloured  
caps bowed,

With Thankful still leading and Monkery  
close,

The hoofs smacked the clayland, the flying  
clods rose.

They slowed on the clayland, the rain  
pelted by,

The end of a rainbow gleamed out in the  
sky;

Natuna dropped back till Charles heard  
her complain,

Grey Glory's forequarters seemed hung on  
his rein,

Cimmeroon clearly was feeling the strain.  
But the little Gavotte skimmed the clay  
like a witch,  
Charles saw her coquet as she went at  
Jim's Pitch.

They went at Jim's Pitch, through the  
deeply dug gaps  
Where the hoofs of great horses had kicked  
off the scraps,  
And there at the water they met with mis-  
haps,  
For Natuna stopped dead and Grey Glory  
went in  
And a cannon on landing upset Cross-Molin.

As swallows bound northward when apple-  
bloom blows,  
See laggards drop spent from their flight  
as it goes,  
Yet can pause not in Heaven as they scythe  
the thin air

But go on to the house-eaves and the nests  
clinging bare,  
So Charles flashed beyond them, those three  
men the less  
Who had gone to get glory and met with  
distress.

He rode to the rise-top, and saw, down the  
slope,  
The race far ahead at a steady strong lope  
Going over the grassland, too well for his  
peace,  
They were steady as oxen and strong as  
wild geese.

As a man by a cornfield on a windy wild  
day  
Sees the corn bow in shadows ever hurry-  
ing away,  
And wonders, in watching, when the light  
with bright feet  
Will harry those shadows from the ears of  
the wheat,

So Charles, as he watched, wondered when  
the bright face  
Of the finish would blaze on that smouldering  
race.

On the last of the grass, ere the going was  
dead,  
Counter Vair's man shot out with his horse  
by the head,  
Like a partridge put up from the stubble  
he sped,  
He dropped Kubbadar and he flew by Red  
Ember  
Up to Monkery's girth like a leaf in  
November.

Then Stormalong followed, and went to the  
front,  
And just as the find puts a flame to a hunt,  
So the rush of those horses put flame to  
the race.  
Charles saw them all shaken to quickening  
pace.

And Monkery moved, not to let them go by,  
And the steadiest rider made ready to fly;  
Well into the wet land they leaped from  
the dry,

They scattered the rain-pools that mirrored the sky,

They crushed down the rushes that pushed  
from the plough.

And Charles longed to follow, but muttered "Not now."

"Not now," so he thought, "Yet if not"  
(he said) "when

Shall I come to those horses and scupper  
their men?

Will they never come back? Shall I never  
get up?"

So he drank bitter gall from a very cold  
cup.

But he nursed his horse gently and prayed  
for the best,

And he caught Cimmeroon, who **was** sadly  
distrest,

And he passed Cimmeroon, with the  
thought that the black

Was as nearly dead beat as the man on his  
back.

Then he gained on his field who were galled  
by the Churn,

The plough searched them out as they came  
to the Turn.

But Gavotte, black and coral, went strong  
as a spate

Charles thought "She's a flier and she car-  
ries no weight."

And now, beyond question the field began  
tailing,

For all had been tested and many were  
ailing,

The riders were weary, the horses were  
failing,

The blur of bright colours rolled over the  
railing.

With the grunts of urged horses, and the  
oaths of hot men,

“Gerr on, you,” “Come on, now,” agen  
and agen;

They spattered the mud on the willow tree’s  
bole

And they charged at the danger; and the  
danger took toll.

For Monkery landed, but dwelt on the  
fence

So that Counter Vair passed him in gal-  
loping thence.

Then Stormalong blundered, then bright  
Muscatel

Slipped badly on landing and stumbled and  
fell,

Then rose in the morrish, with his man on  
his neck

Like a nearly dead sailor afloat on a wreck,  
With his whip in the mud and his stirrups  
both gone,

Yet he kept in the saddle and made him  
go on.

As Charles leaped the Turn, all the field  
was tailed out

Like petals of roses that wind blows about,  
Like petals of colour blown back and  
brought near,

Like poppies in wind-flaws when corn is  
in ear,

Fate held them or sped them, the race was  
beginning.

Charles said, "I must ride, or I've no  
chance of winning."

So gently he quickened, yet making no call;  
Right Royal replied as though knowing it  
all,

He passed Kubbadar who was ready to fall,  
Then he strode up to Hadrian, up to his  
girth,

They eyed the Dyke's glitter and picked  
out a berth.

Now the race reached the water and over  
it flew

In a sweep of great muscle strained taut  
and guyed true.

There Muscatel floundered and came to a  
halt,

Muscatel, the bay chaser without any fault.

Right Royal's head lifted, Right Royal took  
charge,

On the left near the railings, ears cocked,  
going large,

Leaving Hadrian behind as a yacht leaves  
a barge.

Though Hadrian's rider called something  
unheard,

He was past him at speed like the albatross  
bird,

Running up to Path Finder, they leaped,  
side by side,

And the foam from Path Finder flecked  
white on his hide.

And on landing, he lifted, while Path  
Finder dwelt,  
And his noble eye brightened from the  
glory he felt,  
And the mud flung behind him flicked Path  
Finder's chest,  
As he left him behind and went on to the  
rest.

Charles cast a glance back, but he could  
not divine  
Why the man on Path Finder should make  
him a sign,  
Nor why Hadrian's rider should shout, and  
then point,  
With his head nodded forward and a jerked  
elbow joint.

But he looked as he pointed, both forward  
and down,  
And he saw that Right Royal was smeared  
like a clown,

Smeared red and bespattered with flecks of  
bright blood,  
From a blood-vessel burst, as he well understood.

And just as he saw it, Right Royal went  
strange  
As one whom Death's finger has touched to  
a change;  
He went with a stagger that sickened the  
soul,  
As a force stricken feeble and out of control.

Charles thought, "He is dying, and this is  
the end,  
I am losing my Emmy and killing my  
friend;  
He was hurt when we fell, as I thought at  
the first,  
And I've forced him three miles with a  
blood-vessel burst.

And his game heart went on." Here a rush  
close behind

Made him cast a glance back with despair  
in his mind.

It was Cimmeroon rushing, his lips twitcht  
apart,

His eyes rolled back sightless, and death  
in his heart.

He reached to Right Royal, then fell, and  
was dead,

Nevermore to stretch reins with his beauti-  
ful head.

A gush of bright blood filled his mouth as  
he sank,

And he reached out his hoofs to the heave  
of his flank,

And Charles, leaning forward, made cer-  
tain, and cried,

"This is Cimmeroon's blood, blown in pass-  
ing beside,

And Roy's going strangely was just that  
he felt  
Death coming behind him, or blood that  
he smelt."

So Charles's heart lightened and Royal  
went steady  
As a water bound seaward set free from  
an eddy,  
As a water sucked downward to leap at a  
weir  
Sucked swifter and swifter till it shoot like  
a spear.

There, a mile on ahead, was the Stand like  
a cliff,  
Grey wood, packed with faces, under banners  
blown stiff,  
Where, in two minutes more, they would  
cheer for him—if—

If he came to those horses still twelve  
lengths ahead.

“O Royal, you do it, or kill me!” he said.

They went at the hurdle as though it  
weren't there,

White splinters of hurdle flew up in the  
air,

And down, like a rabbit, went Syringa the  
mare;

Her man somersaulted right under Gavotte,  
And Syringa went on but her rider did not.

But the little Gavotte tucked her feet away  
clear,

Just an inch to one side of the fallen man's  
ear,

With a flash of horse wisdom as she went  
on the wing

Not to tread on man's body, that marvel-  
lous thing.

As in mill-streams in summer the dark  
water drifts  
Petals mown in the hayfield skimmed over  
by swifts,  
Petals blue from the speedwell or sweet  
from the lime,  
And the fish rise to test them, as they float,  
for a time,  
Yet they all loiter sluicewards and are  
whirled, and then drowned,  
So the race swept the horses till they glim-  
mered the ground.

Charles looked at those horses, and speed-  
ily guesst  
That the roan horse, Red Ember, was one  
of the best;  
He was level and easy, not turning a hair,  
But with power all ready when his rider  
should care,  
And he leaped like a lover and his coat still  
did shine.

Charles thought, "He's a wonder, and he's twelve lengths from mine."

There were others still in it, according to looks:—

Sir Lopez, and Soyland, and Peterkinooks, Counter Vair and Gavotte, all with plenty to spend;

Then Monkery worn, and The Ghost at his end.

But the roan horse, Red Ember, seemed playing a game.

Charles thought, "He's the winner; he can run us all tame."

The wind brought a tune and a faint noise of cheers,

Right Royal coquetted and cocked up his ears.

Charles saw his horse gaining; the going increased;

His touch on the mouth felt the soul of the  
beast,  
And the heave of each muscle and the look  
of his eye  
Said, "I'll come to those horses, and pass  
them, or die."

Like a thing in a dream the grey buildings  
drew nearer,  
The babble rose louder and the organ's  
whine clearer,  
The hurdle came closer, he rushed through  
its top  
Like a comet in heaven that nothing can  
stop.

Then they strode the green grass for the  
Lost Lady's grave,  
And Charles felt Right Royal rise up like  
a wave,  
Like a wave far to seaward that lifts in a  
line

And advances to shoreward in a slipping  
incline,

And climbs, and comes toppling, and  
advances in glory,

Mounting inwards, marching onwards,  
with his shoulders all hoary,

Sweeping shorewards with a shouting  
to burst on the sand,

So Right Royal sent meaning through the  
rein in each hand.

Charles felt like a captain whose ship has  
long chased

Some ship better handled, better manned,  
better placed,

And has all day beheld her, that ship of his  
dream,

Bowing swanlike beyond him up a blue hill  
of gleam,

Yet, at dark, the wind rising makes his  
rival strike sail

While his own ship crowds canvas and  
comes within hail;  
Till he see her, his rival, snouting into the  
grey,  
Like a sea-rock in winter that stands and  
breaks spray,  
And by lamplight goes past her in a roar-  
ing of song  
Shouting, "Let fall your royals: stretch  
the halliards along!"

Now The Ghost dropped behind him, now  
his horses drew close.  
Charles watched them, in praying, while  
his hopes rose and rose,  
"O God, give me patience, give me luck,  
give me skill,  
For he's going so grandly I think that he  
will."

They went at Lost Lady's like Severn at  
flood,

With an urging of horses and a squelching  
of mud;  
By the hot flanks of horses the toppings  
were bruised,  
And Syringa the manless swerved right  
and refused.

Swerved right on a sudden, as none could  
expect,  
Straight into Right Royal, who slithered  
and pecked,  
Though Charles held him up and got safely  
across,  
He was round his nag's neck within touch  
of a toss.

He gat to his saddle, he never knew how;  
What hope he had had was knocked out of  
him now,  
But his courage came back as his terror  
declined,  
He spoke to Right Royal and made up his  
mind.

He judged the lengths lost and the chance  
that remained,  
And he followed his field, and he gained,  
and he gained.

He watched them, those horses, so splen-  
did, so swift,  
Whirled down the green roadway like  
leaves in the lift:

Now he measured their mettle, and said  
with a moan,

“They can beat me, Lord help me, though  
they give me a stone.

Red Ember’s a wonder, and Soyland’s the  
same,

And Gavotte there’s a beauty, and she goes  
like a flame;

But Peterkinooks, that I used to despise,  
Is the horse that must win if his looks are  
not lies.”

Their bright colours flitted as at dusk in  
Brazil

Bright birds reach the tree-tops when the  
land wind falls still,  
When the sky is all scarlet on the tops of  
the trees  
Comes a whirl of birds flying, blue and  
orange and green.

As a whirl of notes running in a fugue that  
men play,  
And the thundering follows as the pipe  
flits away,  
And the laughter comes after and the haut-  
boys begin,  
So they ran at the hurdle and scattered the  
whin.  
As they leaped to the race-course the sun  
burst from cloud  
And like tumult in dream came the roar of  
the crowd.

For to right and to left, now, were crowded  
men yelling,

And a great cry boomed backward like  
muffled bells knelling,  
And a surge of men running seemed to fol-  
low the race,  
The horses all trembled and quickened their  
pace.

As the porpoise, grown weary of his rush  
through the dim  
Of the unlitten silence where the swift-  
nesses swim,  
Learns at sudden the tumult of a clipper  
bound home  
And exults with this playmate and leaps  
in her foam,

Or as nightingales coming into England in  
May,  
Coming songless at sunset, being worn with  
the way,  
Settle spent in the twilight, drooping head  
under wing,

Yet are glad when the dark comes, while  
at moonrise they sing;

Or as fire on a hillside, by happy boys  
kindled,

That has burnt black a heath-tuft, scorcht  
a bramble, and dwindled,

Blown by wind yet arises in a wave of  
flogged flame,

So the souls of those horses to the testing  
time came.

Now they closed on their leaders, and the  
running increased,

They rushed down the arc curving round  
to the east;

All the air rang with roaring, all the peo-  
pled loud stands

Roared aloud from tense faces, shook with  
hats and waved hands.

So they cleared the green gorse-bush by  
bursting it through,

There was no time for thinking, there was  
scarce time to do.

Charles gritted his spirit as he charged  
through the gorse:

“You must just grin and suffer: sit still on  
your horse.”

There in front was a hurdle and the Dis-  
tance Post white,

And the long, green, broad Straight washed  
with wind and blown bright;

Now the roaring had screaming, bringing  
names to their ears:

“Come, Soyland!” “Sir Lopez!” Then  
catcalls; then cheers.

“Sir Lopez! Sir Lopez!” then the jiggling  
brass laughter

From the yellow tost swing-boats swooping  
rafter to rafter.

Then the blare of all organs, then the roar  
of all throats,

And they shot past the side shows, the  
horses and boats.

Now the Wants of the Watchers whirled  
into the race

Like flames in their fury, like men in the  
face,

Mad-red from the Wanting that made them  
alive,

They fought with those horses or helped  
them to strive.

Like leaves blown on Hudson when maples  
turn gold,

They whirled in their colour, they clutched  
to catch hold,

They sang to the riders, they smote at their  
hearts

Like flakes of live fire, like castings of  
darts.

As a snow in Wisconsin when the darkness  
comes down,

Running white on the prairie, making all  
the air brown,  
Blinding men with the hurry of its mil-  
lions of feet,  
So the Wants pelted on them, so they  
blinded and beat.

And like spirits calm shining upon horses  
of flame,  
Came the Friends of those riders to shield  
them from shame,  
White as fire white-burning, rushing each  
by his friend,  
Singing songs of the glory of the world  
without end;

And as men in Wisconsin driving cars in  
the snow  
Butt against its impulsion and face to the  
blow,  
Tossing snow from their bonnets as a ship  
tosses foam,

So the Friends tossed the Wantings as they  
brought their friends home.

Now they charged the last hurdle that led  
to the Straight,  
Charles longing to ride, though his spirit  
said "Wait."  
He came to his horses as they came to the  
leap,  
Eight hard-driven horses, eight men breath-  
ing deep.

On the left, as he leaped it, a flashing of  
brown  
Kicking white on the grass, showed that  
Thankful was down;  
Then a glance right and left showed, that  
barring all flukes,  
It was Soyland's, Sir Lopez', or Peter-  
kinooks'.

For Stormalong blundered and dwelt as  
he landed,

Counter Vair's man was beaten and Monk-  
ery stranded.

As he reached to Red Ember the man on  
the red

Cried, "Lord, Charlie Cothill, I thought you  
were dead!"

He passed the Red Ember, he came to the  
flank

Of Peterkinooks, whom he reached and  
then sank.

There were only two others, going level  
alone,

First the spotted cream jacket, then the  
blue, white and roan.

Up the street of green race-course they  
strained for the prize,

While the stands blurred with waving and  
the air shook with cries:

"Now, Sir Lopez!" "Come, Soyland!"

"Now, Sir Lopez! Now, now!"

Then Charles judged his second, but he  
could not tell how.

But a glory of sureness leaped from horse  
into man,  
And the man said, "Now, beauty," and  
the horse said, "I can."  
And the long weary Royal made an effort  
the more,  
Though his heart thumped like drum-beats  
as he went to the fore.

Neck and neck went Sir Lopez and Soy-  
land together,  
Soyland first, a short head, with his neck  
all in lather;  
Both were ridden their hardest, both were  
doing their best,  
Right Royal reached Soyland and came to  
his chest.

There Soyland's man saw him with the heel  
of his eye,

A horse with an effort that could beat him  
or tie;

Then he glanced at Sir Lopez, and he bit  
through his lip,

And he drove in his spurs and he took up  
his whip.

There he lashed the game Soyland who had  
given his all,

And he gave three strides more, and then  
failed at the call,

And he dropped behind Royal like a leaf in  
a tide:

Then Sir Lopez and Royal ran on side by  
side.

There they looked at each other, and they  
rode, and were grim;

Charles thought, "That's Sir Lopez. I  
shall never beat him."

All the yells for Sir Lopez seemed to darken  
the air,

They were rushing past Emmy and the  
White Post was there.

He drew to Sir Lopez; but Sir Lopez drew  
clear;

Right Royal clung to him and crept to his  
ear.

Then the man on Sir Lopez judged the  
moment had come

For the last ounce of effort that would  
bring his horse home.

So he picked up his whip for three swift  
slashing blows,

And Sir Lopez drew clear, but Right Royal  
stuck close.

Charles sat still as stone, for he dared not  
to stir—

There was that in Right Royal that needed  
no spur.

In the trembling of an instant power leaped  
up within,

Royal's pride of high spirit not to let the  
bay win.

Up he went, past his withers, past his neck,  
to his head,

With Sir Lopez' man lashing, Charles still,  
seeing red.

So they rushed for one second, then Sir  
Lopez shot out:

Charles thought, "There, he's done me,  
without any doubt.

O come now, Right Royal!"

And Sir Lopez changed feet  
And his ears went back level; Sir Lopez  
was beat.

Right Royal went past him, half an inch,  
half a head,

Half a neck, he was leading, for an instant  
he led;

Then a hooped black and coral flew up like  
a shot,

With a lightning-like effort from little  
Gavotte.

The little bright mare, made of nerves and  
steel springs,  
Shot level beside him, shot ahead as with  
wings.

Charles felt his horse quicken, felt the desperate beat  
Of the blood in his body from his knees to  
his feet.

Three terrible strides brought him up to  
the mare,  
Then they rushed to wild shouting through  
a whirl of blown air;  
Then Gavotte died to nothing; Soyland  
came once again  
Till his muzzle just reached to the knot on  
his rein.

Then a whirl of urged horses thundered  
up, whipped and blown,

Soyland, Peterkinooks, and Red Ember the  
roan.

For an instant they challenged, then they  
drooped and were done;

Then the White Post shot backwards, Right  
Royal had won.

Won a half length from Soyland, Red  
Ember close third;

Fourth, Peterkinooks; fifth, Gavotte  
harshly spurred;

Sixth, Sir Lopez, whose rider said "Just at  
the Straight

He swerved at the hurdle and twisted a  
plate."

Then the numbers went up; then John  
Harding appeared

To lead in the Winner while the bookmak-  
ers cheered.

Then the riders weighed-in, and the meet-  
ing was over,

And bright Emmy Crowthorne could go  
with her lover.

For the bets on Right Royal which Cothill  
had made  
The taker defaulted, they never were paid;  
The taker went West, whence he sent  
Charles's bride  
Silver bit-cups and beadwork on antelope  
hide.

Charles married his lady, but he rode no  
more races;  
He lives on the Downland on the blown  
grassy places,  
Where he and Right Royal can canter for  
hours  
On the flock bitten turf full of tiny blue  
flowers.

There the Roman pitchd camp, there the  
Saxon kept sheep,

There he lives out this Living that no man  
can keep,  
That is manful but a moment before it must  
pass,  
Like the stars sweeping westward, like the  
wind on the grass.

THE END.

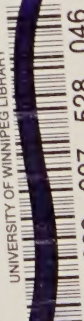






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